

## THE ATTACHE

By P. Y. BLACK

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Cannon and Powers rose and howled with joy when their striker brought in the card, a most official card—"Mr. Kido Mabuchi, the Japanese Legation, Washington, D. C." In the big school in Massachusetts where Mabuchi as a boy had studied the mysteries of American civilization, with Cannon and Powers as his chief instructors, he had struggled through a course of football. He now required all the power of muscular resistance thus gained to withstand the onslaught of these friends of his school days.

"You monsters! You dragons of America!" he cried, falling backward into the only armchair the youngsters' bare quarters possessed. "Has West Point, then, not reformed you?"

"Shut up, you lovely little brute, and come to my bosom again! Ain't he sweet, Powers? Observe his little tan tootsies. The dude has been built in London and Paris. Kido, oh, Kido, is this a grateful return for all the republican simplicity you imbibed at Hallow?"

They sat down, one on either side of Mabuchi. Their tall, bony, wire woven frames far overtopped that of the graceful oriental.

"Well, tell me, then," said Mabuchi, smiling.

"Tell you? It's you who've got to do the telling, Kido," they cried together. "We're nothing to tell," Cannon added. "When you left for the war, we got through West Point somehow and are existing among cowboys and Indians on these broad, unlovely plains. It was good of you to come to see us, as we could not come to Washington, but you always were a decent little specimen of foreign bric-a-brac. Now tell us about yourself."

"It is not much to tell. When my country went to war with China, I was ordered home, you know. Then I served with the army, and the honorable general spoke well of me in dispatches and I was promoted. The war ended, and my government sent me to travel. I was everywhere—London, St. Petersburg, Berlin, Vienna and Paris."

"How I should have liked to do Paris with you! There's a French count, an ex-officer, here stopping with the colonel. I suppose you met heaps of them in Paris? He's studying America too. Count—Count—what's his name—Count?"

"Count Diecandabar!" cried the striker, opening the door of the young officers' sitting room to usher in an elderly, was mustached Frenchman. Powers and Cannon advanced to greet the new visitor. Kido Mabuchi rose slowly, his yellow brown face turning gray.

"Count d'Eisenbas," Powers said, "we are honored. Let me introduce to you Mr. Kido Mabuchi of the Japanese legation and an old school friend of ours. We were just telling him it was curious that you and he, both studying us savages for the benefit of your governments, should meet at such an out of the way hole as Fort Drake."

The count made a rush of effusive greeting at the Japanese, who coolly took his hand.

"Mon Dieu, gentlemen! You afford to me surprises the most welcome."

"You know each other, then?" said Powers.

"Know?" cried d'Eisenbas. "We are comrades since long time."

"Yes," said Kido, and the laugh was gone from the eyes which had sparkled on his old friends, "we met in Paris."

"And are ravished to meet in America?" cried the count with a hand on either of Mabuchi's shoulders.

Cannon and Powers looked at each other in amazement. It was impossible not to note the dearth of delight in Kido's face.

"On this hot afternoon, when I had nothing to do, I remembered our last game at poker, gentlemen, and I said: 'Ha! I shall go and have my revanche from the youthful giants, Messrs. Cannon and Powers.' May I? For Mabuchi at baccarat, ecarte and the games of Paris. I know, but poker?"

"I pray—excuse me," said Mabuchi gravely. "I no longer play cards."

"Ah! Since Paris?" cried d'Eisenbas, with a shooting glance.

"Since Paris," Kido assented calmly. "Pshaw, Kido," cried Cannon, "you'll simply have to play poker in Washington. Count, let me offer you something cooling. Kido—why your glass is full yet!"

"I don't touch anything," said Mabuchi gravely.

"Since Paris?" again the Frenchman asked and mocked.

"Since Paris," said Mabuchi.

"Ah, I see, you want not to play poker. You have much to talk. Au revoir, my American giants. We shall meet at the colonel's. Mabuchi, shall we meet?"

"We shall meet," said Kido, rising and bowing with grave oriental ceremony.

The school chums stared on Kido. "What the devil happened to you in Paris?" Cannon cried again. "Why did that Frenchman grin in that measly way, as if—as if he owned you? Speak, you little lump of bronze. What mischief did you have the nerve to get into without Powers and me to haul you out again?"

In the corner of the colonel's broad veranda that night Count d'Eisenbas spoke in French briefly and coldly to the little Japanese.

"I cornered you here on purpose," he said. "I have given you a year, and you are not ready. Well, tomorrow you must make good your promise or I shall hand these notes in my breast pocket to your chief."

Kido Mabuchi went home to his bunk, hastily fitted up in Cannon's room, but slept not at all.

In the morning when his chums came in from stables and early company drills they found the attache sealing letters on which he had been very busy and which he now put in his pocket.

He was very amiable, very cheerful and very calm. It is something to have had ancestors of oriental blood and oriental faith; it is something to be able to say when the hour has come: "Is it, then, time? Good. Just a minute, and I shall be ready," to finish the cigarette calmly, to nod to friends a smiling adieu and then to perform the harakiri decently and with regard to other people's sensibilities.

The hour before sundown is admirable for target shooting. The four went down to the range late in the afternoon. The count had been bragging a little of his skill with a rifle, and Cannon and Powers had coaxed the Japanese into making a match with him. D'Eisenbas mocked at that. He seemed to have a great contempt for the attache.

"Mais—Mabuchi?" he laughed. "I shall beat him at the range, as I beat him at ecarte in Paris. What are the—en Anglais—stakes?"

Kido's eyes involuntarily flashed on the Frenchman's breast pockets, and the count grinned in a way which Cannon and Powers resented, but could not understand.

Powers and D'Eisenbas were to mark for Kido, and Cannon and Mabuchi for D'Eisenbas.

"It is very simple," said Cannon for the count's benefit. "While you mark, Count d'Eisenbas, bullets, four, three whatever the shot is, the targets revolve, and Powers will paste the hole on the lower one. Remember, be careful to wiggle waggle the danger flag distinctly if you want to examine closely."

Then Kido saw the gates open before him and was content. This matter of suicide might be very simply arranged. Powers would be in the pit with him, stooping down with his paster at the lowered target. The count was a fair shot at least. At 300 yards he could hardly miss. What so simple as to leap up in the nick of time and receive the bullet? It was not the harakiri, to be sure, but in matters of suicide one should accommodate oneself to place and other circumstances.

D'Eisenbas won the toss and elected to have Kido shoot first. He and Powers went to the butt to mark. Kido began to shoot at 300 yards mechanically, and, behold, the gates closed! Fate laughs at schemes. The plan of Kido was shattered. D'Eisenbas, wrathful at the Jap's good shots, forgetting where he was, forgetting the danger signal, leaped up with an oath to challenge a bullseye and fell back again in the pit, shot through his plotting brain.

Kido rushed into Cannon's arms with strange, mad eyes.

"It is the gods!" he screamed. "It was no murder. I meant it the other way because I could not perform harakiri on myself in your honorable room. Look, then, look!"

Cannon clutched the letter Kido had written in the morning. In it the attache told his tale—the untold tale of many another in the clutches of the "secret service" of unscrupulous European governments. D'Eisenbas had failed to corrupt the secretary by bribe or promise, but in Paris he had introduced him to cards and women, and the women had got from the lad a few of Japan's plans for fortification and army organization. Threatened with disclosure by the spy, who also held over his head notes of hand for "debts of honor," Kido saw but one way to escape disclosure and disgrace. But the gods had forbidden it. The count instead was dead.

"I shot him," he said over and over again, "but it was not murder. I meant him to shoot me."

"We understand," said his chums. "It's all right, and the gods have more horse sense today than usual. We'll take these papers from his pockets and destroy them and report the circumstances—ad accident—prominent men—you know."

"And he's really dead?"

"Sure dead," said Powers. "But try to look decently regretful, Kido."

The abbot of fools, who was also known in different parts as the archbishop or bishop of fools, the abbot of misrule, the lord of misrule, the master of unreason and L'Abbe de Liesse, was the person who used to superintend the saturnalia, which were common in different parts of Europe from the fifth to the sixteenth century. The feast of fools was an imitation of the heathen saturnalia and, like this, was celebrated in December; hence the confusion of ideas which has arisen in mixing this feast with the ordinary Christmas revels. The chief celebration of the feast of fools fell upon Innocent's day, but the whole revels lasted from Christmas to the last day of Epiphany. The young people generally elected a leader, who went by one of the names quoted, and he was consecrated with many grotesque and ridiculous ceremonies.

England, Scotland, France and Germany all practiced these wild saturnalia, and it was with great difficulty that they were finally abolished. The abbot was not responsible for any trick or practical joke played on the rest of the community by his orders, and the victims had simply to "grin and bear it." In the temple (law headquarters, London) the office of the lord of misrule seems to have been a coveted one, for we read that it was only given to young men of good family.

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## "UP THE SPOUT."

One Explanation of the Origin of This Suggestive Saying.

"If you are suffering from ennui and want to divert your mind from life's routine I'll give you a panacea," said a young man who has a penchant for delving into unusual things. "Just pick out some quaint phrase or expression, whether it is a clear cut epigram or a crude colloquialism, and trace it to its source. You will invariably find that these phrases, or 'saws,' as they are called, have a history all their own. And they are usually descriptive of some actual condition. These provincial phrases have enriched the language and have added to its force as well, though some of the provincial phrases are a good stride from the line of correct English. Some days ago several friends were disputing about the origin of these quaint old sayings, and one in particular was used which is as familiar to every one as the dial of a clock. I refer to 'gone up the spout.' It is applied to almost any failure or misfortune. A firm that fails has 'gone up the spout.'"

"A politician who is crushed is 'gone up the spout.' A man will say that if he does not do a certain thing he'll go 'up the spout.' Going 'up the spout' is a penalty for every sort of failure. Even if a man is dying his friends will answer inquiries with a sad shake of the head and say that he's 'gone up the spout.' The discussion as to the origin of this phrase or expression did not result in any elucidation of its history. A few days later I attended church in this city, and the pastor, who has been occupying a New Orleans pulpit for years, told his congregation how the phrase originated.

"Years ago in England money lenders had private offices for the convenience of a particular class of patrons. Any man who has ever gone into a pawnshop, passing under the glint of three gleaming yellow balls, knows what humiliation is secretly felt as he emerges. Many people, in fact, are too timid to enter a pawnshop. It is a matter of pride with them. They do not like to confess their imppecuniosity. With the noble paupers of England it was a thing they always left to some trusted servant. It was only natural, then, that some means of allowing these high toned borrowers to pawn their jewels without being seen would be invented. The 'spout' was the result. It was simply a dumb waiter. The man upstairs never saw his patron. The article was put in the 'spout,' sent up, and the money came back, together with the ticket. That is how the expression 'gone up the spout' started. It can be readily seen how very expressive it is when applied to crushing adversity."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

### His Brother's Skull.

It was a rather unusual ornament for a room, if it could be called an ornament, but bachelors often have strange things in their rooms. This was a human skull, polished and made into a receptacle for stray bits of paper or anything else that one wanted to put into it. The top could be removed at pleasure.

It was a greswome thing to have on a writing desk, and it attracted a great deal of attention. Callers shuddered as they looked at it, and one day one of them asked the bachelor why he had it around.

"Oh, it's a sort of keepsake," he said carelessly. "It was my brother's."

"Your brother's?"

He looked surprised as he saw every one in the room edging away from him.

"Why, yes," he said.

"Do you mean to say that that was your brother's skull?" demanded one.

"Certainly. What's the matter with it?" he asked, with apparent astonishment. "He gave it to me when he was married. He got it when he was a medical student, but his wife wouldn't have it around the house."

### Blazing a Trail.

The ignorance of many people about the habits and capacities of the blind is illustrated by a question which a man once asked Helen Keller. Although he was a scholar and a man of letters, he wanted to know if she enjoyed painting! A bright boy, who was a pupil in one of the earliest institutions for the blind, says Fanny Crosby, in her "Life Story," was vastly bored by the foolish questions asked by visitors whom he had to escort about the school.

The climax was reached when he took them to the dining hall.

"Dear me!" exclaimed a wondering dame. "How do you blind folks ever manage to see the way to your mouths?"

"Well, ma'am," replied the boy solemnly. "Each of us hitches one end of a string to his tongue and the other to the leg of his chair. By following that he manages to prevent the victuals losing their way."

### The Movement of Odors.

That odors move with the air or diffuse through it like gases and do not pass through it in waves as sounds do or in swiftly moving particles like the radium emanations seems to be conclusively shown by experiments on the propagation of scents through small tubes. In such tubes there can be no general motion of the air, and the rate of travel of an odor is extremely slow. That of ammonia took over two hours to get through a tube a yard and a half long. The presence of the ammonia could be detected chemically at about the same time that its smell was noticed. It seemed to make little difference in the speed whether the tube was held horizontally or vertically or whether the odor moved up or down.—Success.

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